

Edward Daly, founder of World Airways, dies

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The Tribune

Edward J. Daly, the feisty chairman of World Airways whose exploits ranged from slashing air fares to rescuing South Vietnamese refugees, died at the age of 61 in his home in Orinda.

With a grand vision of making air travel accessible to the general public, Daly was the first in U.S. aviation history to offer the \$99.99 transcontinental fare.

The move, which at the time angered major airlines, marked the beginning of deregulation of the airline industry. It also catapulted Daly into the public spotlight.

Private services attended only by family members were held Monday morning in Santa Clara following cremation.

Following unofficial reports of his death on Saturday from a number of sources, a company spokesman confirmed his death Monday afternoon and said it came after an extended illness.

He said a memorial service for Daly with his friends and associates will be held later.

He is survived by his wife, June, of Orinda; daughter, Charlotte of Oakland; grand-

children, June Behrendt and Mel Behrendt II, of Oakland; brother, Donald of Carmichael; sisters, Grace Truitt of Alameda and Marion Pedresen of Lakewood.

For those who knew him, Daly was a special breed in the airlines industry.

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Major changes not likely
at World Airways, B-1.

65%
\$107
0.74%
Interest Ear
Approx. 12-1

days, dies under

"He was one of the last pioneers who built up their own airlines and ran it," said Norm Weintraub, the chief economist for Teamsters 2707, which represents about 1,500 crew members, flight attendants, stock clerks and mechanics at World.

"He was a hard fighter. I don't know if we could call him fair. He was a determined person and usually did things his way," added Denise O'Leary Ross, business representative for Teamsters Local 2707.

The images created for World during Daly's lifetime were the same images that he chose for himself:

■ The David going up against the Goliaths of the airline industry by drastically slashing transcontinental air fares.

■ The swashbuckling hero dropping out of the sky to rescue Vietnamese refugees and orphans.

Through it all, Daly never left any doubt that it was he — and only he — who was running the show. And with apologies to no one. Employees and business associates either did it Daly's way, or found themselves on the outside looking in.

Daly stepped down from the day-to-day operations of the company when Brian A. Cooke took over as president and chief executive officer in November 1982. Daly retained the position of chairman.

No reasons were given for the change, but sources said then Daly's poor health may have been a reason for the change.

A native of Chicago, Daly majored in chemical engineering at the University of Illinois, boxed semiprofessionally and served with the U.S. Army in the Pacific during World War II.

After the war he went into banking in Los Angeles, established the country's first air freight forwarder and was an executive for two airline service companies before buying World in 1950.

He parlayed his original investment of \$50,000 in the airlines to about \$50 million, the estimated worth of his stock in the company at the time of his death.

Daly did this through a combination of bold moves, from buying the World's first Boeing 707 jet in 1962 to waging air-

fare wars with major airlines.

At the same time, Daly was creating another image for World — as a philanthropic organization.

He donated an elephant to the Oakland Zoo; chartered buses and paid for tickets for underprivileged kids to go to a circus; spent \$152,000 to reimburse passengers who had been stranded by another charter carrier and fly them home; and took 55 cerebral palsy victims on a 30-minute flight over the Bay Area.

There were light moments: Daly showing up disguised as a mobster to accept a "man of the year" award; Daly, piqued after being pressured to complete a deal, dumping \$1.5 million in \$10s and \$20s on the desk of the late Edgar F. Kaiser Sr. to buy some Kaiser-owned land.

And there were the flashes of temper. Daly reportedly fired a flight attendant for serving him the wrong steak sauce.

Daly loudly yanked World's \$3,700-a-year membership out of the Oakland's Chamber of Commerce after a chamber delegation flew on a competing airline. Daly didn't return to

the fold until the chamber executive who headed the trip resigned.

Daly and World's most visible moments came in the closing chapter of the war in Vietnam as the American military effort there was collapsing.

Appalled at conditions he found while on an inspection of World's contracts, Daly, over strenuous government objections and red tape, began air-lifting rice into Cambodia and attempting to ferry South Vietnamese civilians out of Da Nang where they were gathering to escape the North Vietnamese invasion.

Press reports at the time described Daly as "clawed (and) bloody, clothes torn as he smashed soldiers with a pistol butt to clear them off his Boeing 727 so the plane could take off."

A week later he was raising more Cain in Saigon on a highly publicized attempt to fly South Vietnamese orphans out of the country before the North Vietnamese reached the city. He eventually got 57 out and to the U.S., but it took \$1 million of his own money to do it.